

DE News

March 29, 2002 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

Allowable growth legislation signed

Governor Vilsack signed legislation yesterday that sets a 1% allowable growth rate for the 2002-03 school year, which means districts are allowed to increase their cost per pupil spending by \$45, for a total of \$4,557 per student. The bill appropriates a \$59 million increase in state foundation aid.

Please note that a series of related and categorical education appropriations have yet to be decided by the legislature, so our budget situation remains volatile. The Governor's revised proposal remains on the table, which called for the 1% allowable growth rate plus a maintenance of funding for K-12 categoricals such as reduced class size funding and technology funding. The legislature's response, in the form of a combined budget bill, is expected next week. Though much of that budget bill is unknown, they budget targets that have been announced include a reduction in the Teacher Quality program, which would be cut from \$40 million to \$10 million. That proposed reduction breaks a big "continuous funding" promise to the 97% of districts participating in the program, who have worked diligently with their AEAs to implement the new initiatives under very difficult time constraints. On average, beginning teachers would lose \$1,250 with this reduction.

Community colleges would see a \$4 million increase in state aid under the Governor's recommendations, but legislative budget targets keep the funding at current levels. Reduced funding already has caused severe tuition increases, which impact students by forcing them to deplete their savings, increase their debt or curtail their education, none of which has any benefit to the economic recovery of Iowa. This bodes especially ill for the state's future since the vast majority of community college students come from Iowa and stay in Iowa after they graduate to work or continue their education.

Two new state board members nominated

Governor Vilsack has nominated Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, former superintendent of schools for the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines, and James Billings, recently retired president of Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville to the State Board of Education. They would succeed John C. White of Iowa City and board president Corine Hadley of Newton. Vilsack also reappointed Mary Jean Montgomery of Spencer and Gene Vincent of Carroll to the state education board. The nominations are subject to Senate confirmation and would be effective May 1, 2002.

Legislative update

For a complete legislative update, visit <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/legis.html>

Mark your calendars

- April 1 -- AEA Comprehensive Improvement Plans (CIPs) due
- April 15 -- LEA Certified budgets due to county auditor and SBRC
- April 14-16 -- Midwest Regional At Risk Conference. "Choices or Second Chances: Consider the Alternatives." Keynoters include Alfie Kohn, Ron Glodoski, and Dr. Nicholas Colangelo. Register online at www.dropoutprevention.org.
- May 1 -- State Equity Award applications are due. Contact Mary Sullivan, 515/281-5471, mary.sullivan@ed.state.ia.us; or Tom Andersen, 515/281-8170, tom.andersen@ed.state.ia.us

Visit these Web site updates

April Superintendents Update: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/su/index.html>

Annual Transportation Data Summary Reports:

www.state.ia.us/educate/programs/transportation

Teacher Compensation overview and details:

<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/tqt/tc/index.html>

State and national grant opportunities: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/grants.html>

A list of Iowa educational organizations: <http://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/edorg.asp>

Electronic mailbag: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/oofd/mailbag.html>

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Iowa Department of Education Mission:

"Helping communities meet the learning needs of all of their children and adults"

DE News provides timely information about legislative and policy issues, grants and funding, trends in education, and other items of immediate interest to Iowa educators and policymakers.

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